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Security Council

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Letter dated 11 August 2015 from the Permanent Representative of Qatar to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit to you a letter dated 11 August 2015 from the representative of the National Coalition of Syrian Revolution and Opposition Forces (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex brought to the attention of the members of the Security Council and circulated as a document of the Council.

(*Signed*) Alya Ahmed S. **Al-Thani**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 11 August 2015 from the Permanent Representative of Qatar to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

On behalf of the National Coalition of Syrian Revolution and Opposition Forces, I write to you regarding the unanimous adoption by the Security Council of resolution 2235 (2015). If implemented effectively and rigorously enforced, this resolution has the ability to send a strong signal to the Syrian regime that its use of chemical weapons will not go unaccounted for.

The Syrian regime has much to account for. Two years ago this month, Syrian regime forces indiscriminately attacked the civilian-occupied areas of Ein Tarma, Moadamiyah and Zamalka in the Ghouta area of Damascus with surface-to-surface rockets containing the nerve agent sarin (see A/HRC/25/65). The sarin attacks killed 1,429 people. The vast majority of the victims were civilians. Many were women and children.

The illegal and indiscriminate attacks on eastern Ghouta were followed by systematic and repeated chemical weapons attacks across Syria's opposition-held areas. In the two years since the Security Council adopted resolution 2118 (2013) prohibiting the Syrian regime's use of chemical weapons, there have been at least 46 documented chemical weapons attacks in Syria, most occurring through the weaponization of the toxic chemical chlorine gas. In July 2015 alone, the Violations Documentation Centre documented four separate chemical weapons attacks which took place in the opposition-held areas of Deir Ezzor and the Damascus suburbs (see enclosure).

Chlorine is now the Syrian regime's chemical weapon of choice. In almost all of the chemical attacks perpetrated since August 2013, victims have exhibited symptoms consistent with chlorine gas, including redness in the eyes, runny noses, trachea spasms and wheezing breathing. The perpetrators of these chemical attacks have been consistently clear. Syrian regime air forces. So, too, have the vehicles through which such chemicals are deployed: helicopters. Thus, of the 37 witnesses interviewed by the Fact-finding Mission of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in August 2014, a total of 32 saw or heard the sound of the helicopter at the time of chemical weapons attacks, while 26 individuals heard the peculiar sound of the falling barrel bombs containing toxic chemicals (see OPCW document S/1230/2014). Only the Syrian regime has aerial capacity. Only opposition-held areas were targeted by chemical attacks.

There is no question that effective implementation of Security Council resolution 2235 (2015) will lead to the identification of the Syrian regime as responsible for the chemical weapons attacks in Syria. The only question is whether the Security Council will act to provide the deterrence the Syrian people need and the justice they deserve. The Security Council has already provided for Chapter VII consequences to the use of chemical weapons by the regime in resolution 2118 (2013). That is why, today, I appeal to the Security Council to take the following steps:

- **Ensure that the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism has full, unimpeded access** to the locations attached (see enclosure) and to all facilities, individuals and materials in those areas. While we understand that this will be a challenging mission, it is vital that the United Nations and

OPCW jointly investigate the regime's use of these weapons thoroughly. The deliberate obstructionism of the Syrian regime, and its refusal to guarantee the safety of the Joint Mission's staff, must not be permitted to derail, delay or otherwise compromise the investigators' mission.

- **Instruct the Joint Investigative Mechanism to cooperate constructively with the Syrian National Coalition and our forces on the ground, the Free Syrian Army**, who stand ready to assist the Joint Investigative Mechanism in its efforts to attribute responsibility for chemical weapons attacks.

- **Protect Syrian civilians from future chemical weapons attacks** by stopping the Syrian regime's ability to kill by air. Assad's aircraft are the primary delivery mechanism for chemical weapons today, and the leading indiscriminate killer of Syrian civilians. To stop future chlorine attacks, the Security Council must deny the regime its ability to kill by air.

- **Enforce resolution 2118 (2013)** by applying Chapter VII measures to the situation in Syria.

- **End impunity in Syria** by referring the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court.

The Syrian National Coalition is hopeful that resolution 2235 (2015) will lay the groundwork for the justice and accountability that the victims of the regime's chemical weapons attacks deserve. We are eager to assist the OPCW-United Nations investigators towards this end. Let us be clear, however, that chemical weapons are just one tool in the Syrian regime's vicious arsenal of war and they are by no means the most lethal. Indiscriminate aerial attacks using conventional weapons are now responsible for over 60 per cent of all civilian deaths across the country. In areas such as Zabadani, aerial attacks are killing civilians en masse, razing civilian infrastructure to the ground and helping to perpetuate a policy of ethnic cleansing. The Syrian regime's indiscriminate aerial attacks can and must be stopped. On behalf of our people, we therefore ask that you employ all measures necessary to stop chemical and conventional attacks across Syria, beginning through the authorization of a safe zone protected by a no-fly zone over all of Syria.

(*Signed*) Najib **Ghadbian**
Special Representative to the United Nations

Enclosure

Alleged incidents of chemical weapons use in Syria, November 2013-July 2015

Date	*Location*	*Casualties*
8 November 2013	Douma, Rif Dimashq Governorate	1 death
6 December 2013	Yarmouk Camp, Damascus Governorate	1 death
14 January 2014	Daraya, Rif Dimashq Governorate	4 deaths
	Midan, Rif Dimashq Governorate	
2 March 2014	Douma, Rif Dimashq Governorate	4 deaths
28 March 2014	Harasta, Rif Dimashq Governorate	7 deaths
11 April 2014	Harasta, Rif Dimashq Governorate	2 deaths, 12 injured
	Kafr Zita, Hama Governorate	
12 April 2014	Bsirin, Kafr Zita, Hama Governorate	5 injured
14 April 2014	Halfaya, Hama Governorate	4 injured
16 April 2014	Harasta, Hama Governorate	2 deaths, 5 injured
	Morek, Hama Governorate	
	Kafr Zita, Hama Governorate	
	Shir, Latakia Governorate	
18 April 2014	Kafr Zita, Hama Governorate	4 deaths, 35 injured
	Morek, Hama Governorate	
	Khan Sheikhoun, Idlib Governorate	
21 April 2014	Telminis, Idlib Governorate	3 deaths, 200 injured
25 April 2014	Telminis, Idlib Governorate	2 deaths
26 April 2014	Erbeen, Damascus Governorate	1 death
19 May 2014	Kafr Zita, Hama Governorate	2 injured
21 May 2014	Kafr Zita, Hama Governorate	4 injured
22 May 2014	Soran, Hama Governorate	1 death, 38 injured
	Kafr Zita, Hama Governorate	

Date	*Location*	*Casualties*
	Morek, Hama Governorate	
	Khattab, Hama Governorate	
	Latamnah, Hama Governorate	
29 May 2014	Latamnah, Hama Governorate	12 injured
	Kafr Zita, Hama Governorate	
20 August 2014	Jobar, Damascus Governorate	3 deaths
23 August 2014	Erbeen, Damascus Governorate	2 deaths
24 September 2014	Wafideen Camp, Damascus Governorate	7 deaths
	Adra Balad, Damascus Governorate	
	Salamia, Hama Governorate	
	Harasta, Hama Governorate	
21 October 2014	Harasta, Hama Governorate	1 death
25 October 2014	Harasta, Hama Governorate	1 death
25 December 2014	Harasta, Hama Governorate	2 deaths
9 March 2015	Muzayrib, Daraa Governorate	1 injured
15 March 2015	Sarmin City, Idlib Governorate	5 deaths
16 March 2015	Sarmin, Idlib Governorate	7 deaths, 50 injured
	Quminas, Idlib Governorate	
23 March 2015	Sarmin, Idlib Governorate	more than 20 deaths
	Quminas, Idlib Governorate	
24 March 2015	Binnish, Idlib Governorate	more than 30 deaths
26 March 2015	Sarmin, Idlib Governorate	more than 24 injured
30 March 2015	Idlib City, Idlib Governorate	6 injured
31 March 2015	Idlib City, Idlib Governorate	1 death, 27 injured
16 April 2015	Idlib City, Idlib Governorate	7 injured
26 April 2015	Al Hwash village, Homs Governorate	26 injured
	Al Ghab plain, Hama countryside	
27 April 2015	Kafr Oweid, Idlib Governorate	90 injured

Date	*Location*	*Casualties*
29 April 2015	Saraqeb City, Idlib Governorate	12 injured
1 May 2015	Al Nayrab, Aleppo Governorate	10 injured
2 May 2015	Al Nayrab, Aleppo Governorate	2 killed, 100 injured
	Saraqeb, Idlib Governorate	
3 May 2015	Jobar, Damascus Governorate	2 killed, more than 20 injured
6 May 2015	Al Bahariyah, Rif Dimashq Governorate	10 injured
7 May 2015	Kafar Battiekh, Idlib Governorate	more than 150 injured
	Al Janoudiah, Idlib Governorate	
15 May 2015	Mishmishan, Idlib Governorate	2 deaths, 22 injured
16 May 2015	Mishmishan, Idlib Governorate	10 injured
17 May 2015	Mishmishan, Idlib Governorate	40 injured
8 July 2015	Shiekh Yasin, Dier Ezzor Governorate	5 injured
10 July	Shiekh Yasin, Dier Ezzor Governorate	no injured
21 July 2015	Harasta, Hama Governorate	2 deaths, 30 injured
27 July 2015	Eastern Ghouta, Rif Dimashq Governorate	35 injured

Source: Data compiled from the Violations Documentation Centre and Syrian civil defence teams.